

Week after week, I hear from frustrated constituents wanting to know when the government will begin taking our immigration laws seriously. Already, the United States has an illegal alien population of more than 12 million and without prompt action that number will only continue to grow.

Rather than enacting a plan to put illegals on a path to citizenship, Congress must take an enforcement first approach to solving our nation's immigration and border security problems. To accomplish this, I have introduced H.R. 6789, the Loophole Elimination and Verification Enforcement Act, also known as the LEAVE Act.

This commonsense bill will remove the incentives and loopholes in our current laws that encourage illegal aliens to come to the United States to live, work, and overstay their visas. In addition, it will give law enforcement the tools they need to protect our nation and communities.

Specifically, the LEAVE Act will dramatically tighten the forms of identification that may be accepted by the federal government and financial institutions. As an added barrier to hiring illegal immigrants, the LEAVE Act will expand the E-Verify program to require all employers to confirm the work eligibility of their employees and prevent illegals from receiving social security credit for illegally working in the U.S.

The LEAVE Act will reduce incentives for illegals to cross our borders by ending birthright citizenship and excluding illegal aliens from receiving in-state college tuition.

My bill will also strengthen border enforcement by requiring the completion of the border fence and the addition of 8,000 new Border Patrol agents and 3,000 new Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents by 2012.

To increase intergovernmental cooperation, the LEAVE Act will empower local law enforcement to enforce federal immigration laws and reimburse state governments for costs associated with incarcerating illegal aliens. Cities that recklessly disregard our nation's immigration laws by harboring illegals will be barred from receiving federal funds from the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security.

Each year, California households pay an average of \$1,183 to provide health care, education, and incarceration to illegal immigrants. In these economically challenging times, there is no reason that hard-working California families should be forced to bear these costs.

I have introduced the LEAVE Act to steadily reduce our nation's illegal immigrant population. Southern California, already heavily burdened by our nation's failed immigration policies, cannot wait any longer.

GARY G. MILLER
Member of Congress